

anchoring elements to the bridging elements and a laminated structure are two different embodiments of a bridged cartilage plug. Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone conference of June 25, 2004 in which this issue was discussed.

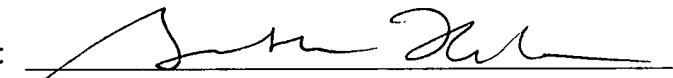
Applicants gratefully acknowledge the finding of allowable subject matter in 18-20. In view of the distinguishability of independent claim 17 as argued above and the finding of the allowable subject matter in claims 18-20, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now allowable.

In light of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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